

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A polishing apparatus comprising:
at least three load-unload stages each for placing a wafer cassette which accommodates a plurality of wafers;
a robot which moves along said at least three load-unload stages, for accessing said respective wafer cassettes;
a polishing unit for polishing a plurality of wafers simultaneously;
a cleaning and drying unit for cleaning and drying the polished wafer;
wherein said robot and said cleaning and drying unit are disposed between said load-unload stages and said polishing unit.
2. A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said robot is movable along a rail disposed in said polishing apparatus.
3. A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said polishing unit comprises a plurality of top rings each for holding the wafer respectively during polishing operation.
4. A polishing apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said polishing unit comprises a plurality of polishing tables each for providing a polishing surface for the wafer.
5. A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising another robot for transferring the wafer in a space between said load-unload stages and said polishing unit.
6. A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a transporter for handling a plurality of the wafers at one time, and for moving the wafer to a preferable position below a top ring which holds the wafer during polishing operation.
7. A polishing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said transporter transfers the wafers to a plurality of the top rings.

8. A polishing apparatus according to claim 6, further comprising a pusher disposed below said transporter for elevating the wafer on said transporter to the top ring.

9. A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said cleaning and drying unit comprises at least three cleaning apparatuses for cleaning the wafer.

10. A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said load-unload stages, said robot, said cleaning and drying unit, and said polishing unit are disposed in order from one side of the polishing apparatus.

11. A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a partition is provided between said polishing unit and said cleaning and drying unit.

12. A polishing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a partition is provided between said load-unload stages and said cleaning and drying unit.

13. A polishing apparatus according to claim 12, wherein a pressure of a space in which said cleaning and drying unit is disposed is adjusted so as to be lower than a pressure of a space in which said load-unload stages are disposed.

14. A polishing apparatus according to claim 13, wherein a pressure of a space in which said polishing unit is disposed is adjusted so as to be lower than a pressure of a space in which said cleaning and drying unit is disposed.